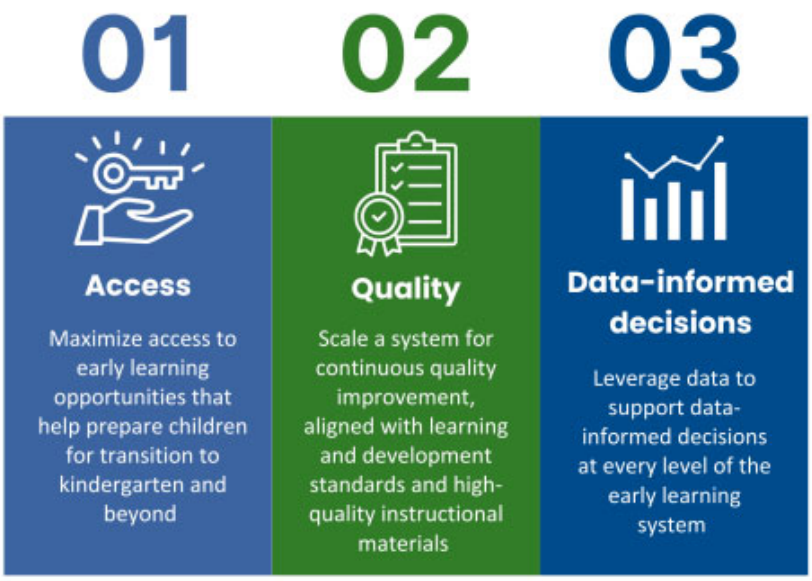
NEWS

The Office of Childhood in 2026

Assistant Commissioner Deidre Anderson-Barbee reflects on 2025 and looks ahead to 2026, a year she says has **"bold possibilities."** The Office of Childhood (OOC) will refresh its Strategic Plan and deepen its engagement with stakeholders in 2026. **Watch the video** to learn more.



Upcoming Office of Childhood Webinar

The next Office of Childhood Stakeholder Webinar will be held virtually through Zoom on **January 28, 2026**. Key topics for this webinar will include:

- Child Care Subsidy Updates - Pay on Authorization/Pay in Advance and Waitlist
- Subsidy MOVERS registration
- Refreshing the Office of Childhood Strategic Plan

There will be two sessions covering the same content to better accomodate stakeholder schedules, one from **1:30-3:00 p.m** and one from **6:30-8:00 p.m.**

For the 1:30-3:00 p.m. session:

Click this link to download a virtual invitation for your e-mail calendar.

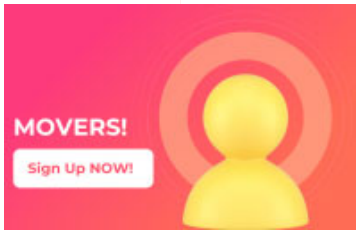
Click this link to join the Webinar when it is live.

For the 6:30-8:00 p.m. session:

Click this link to download a virtual invitation for your e-mail calendar.

Click this link to join the Webinar when it is live.

MissouriBuys powered by MOVERS



The Office of Administration requires all vendors (including child care providers contracted to receive subsidy payments) to register in the new "MissouriBuys powered by MOVERS" system. If you are experiencing difficulty receiving your subsidy or other vendor payments, please ensure you have

registered with MOVERS. Information for registration can be found in the Office of Childhood Newsfeed.

Celebrating 50 Years of IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

As we commemorate this significant anniversary, we reflect on the progress made over the past five decades and the ongoing commitment to ensuring that every child, regardless of their abilities, has access to the supports they need to thrive.

Read more about the impact of IDEA in Missouri on the Office of Childhood Newsfeed.

Funding Opportunity – Innovation Grant to Expand a Child Care Program

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Childhood is excited to announce applications for the 2025-2026 Innovation Grant to Expand a Child Care Program are now open.

This grant helps licensed and license-exempt child care providers expand their programs in partnership with local businesses or community organizations to meet the growing need for quality child care across Missouri. Eligible applicants with an established partnership can receive up to $625,000 in matching funds to cover expansion expenses, such as equipment, minor remodeling, and workforce incentives.

Applications will remain open until **February 28, 2026.** For more information, please see the Innovation Grants web page.

First Steps and Child Care Collaboration Flyer

Need assistance with combining child care and special education? The new First Steps and Child Care Collaboration flyer addresses the role child care providers can play when early intervention services are delivered at their facility for a child in their care.

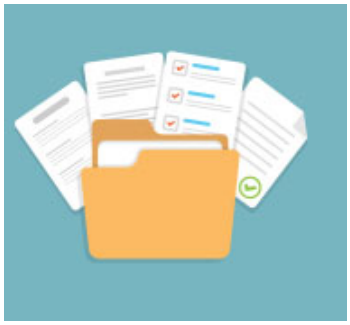
Annual National Home Visiting Week

The Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals announced the 2nd Annual National Home Visiting Week (NHVW) for 2026. The dates are April 20-24, 2026. This is a time to celebrate and recognize home visitors/parent educators and the important impact they make on family and child outcomes.

The Institute has created materials and resources that are available on their website for programs to

use during the 2026 National Home Visiting Week.

New! AfterSchool Training and Resource



If you are looking to start an afterschool program or are in the early stages of running a program, Missouri AfterSchool Network has a fantastic training and a long-term resource for you!

When: Jan 27, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.-noon
Details: Registration is open, clock hours are not available

The Toolkit equips you with 96 comprehensive tools and resources for every aspect of running a successful program, from start-up and staff hiring to program planning, funding strategies, community partnerships, and more. Attending this virtual training will guide you through the Toolkit's offerings and enhance your program's impact by showing you how to leverage its contents.

MOPD Monthly Tip

Directors /administrators who use the MOPD System to invite staff to the employer should confirm with the new employee which email they will use for their MOPD ID before sending the invite from MOPD. This will help ensure the employee receives a new employer invitation correctly from MOPD. Reach out to the MOPD System Navigators at MOPD@dese.mo.gov with any questions.

Conferences

Conference on the Young Years 2026

Get ready to Ignite Curiosity & Inspire Possibilities at the annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY)! OOC is pleased to announce that registration for the 2026 Conference on the Young Years opens **is open.**

CYY will be **March 5-7, 2026**, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center. A wonderful lineup of keynote and breakout presenters are scheduled, equaling over 130 sessions to choose from. The

Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children will also be hosting its annual gala at CYY.

To register, visit the CYY webpage and expand the Registration accordion. We hope to see you at CYY in March!

2026 Missouri DEC Conference

Missouri Division of Early Childhood (MODEC) is excited to announce the 2026 Annual DEC Conference in Columbia, Missouri February 19-20, 2026. The Missouri DEC Conference is the premiere statewide conference for Early Childhood Special Educators presented by Early Childhood Special Educators!

This year's conference will be held at The Hampton Inn & Suites- Columbia (at The University). For information on registration and questions, please see the Office of Childhood Newsfeed article.

Job Vacancies

The OOC is hiring and we would love to have you join our team! Click this link to see open positions.

We Want To Know

Share your stories with the Office of Childhood!

Submit news and updates about Missouri Early Care and Education!

Or email OOCOutreach@dese.mo.gov.

Miss Something?

Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.

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